



**February 2009**  
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## **Welcome to the Montana Primary Care Office (MTPCO) News**

This newsletter is intended to communicate information of interest to CHCs, RHCs, NHSC sites and other partners regarding shortage designation activities, NHSC and J-1 activities and other matters of interest to partners. We welcome your input and recommendations regarding content.

### **National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Information Updates**

The 2009 NHSC loan repayment applications deadline closed on January 31<sup>st</sup> 2009. The NHSC anticipates funding 600-800 new 2009 Loan applications.

The 2009 National Health Service Corp **Scholarship Program (SP) Applicant Information Bulletin (AIB)** is expected to be posted by mid February or early March 2009 and will close thirty days after it is posted. This again provides a small window of opportunity. Conference calls to provide information to applicants, PCO's and others about the 2009 NHSC SP AIB and awards process will be held during the application acceptance cycle. The PCO will be sending more information about the Scholarship Program applications and the conference call as it becomes available.

### **Rules Clarification for Loan Repayment Program**

**Rules clarification for loan repayers who transfer to a different NHSC site.** The NHSC recently sent the PCO's a memo regarding the rules for clinicians who transfer sites: The NHSC statute requires that clinicians transfer to sites of greatest Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) needs. "The NHSC clinician must transfer to an equal or higher HPSA score (greatest need).

It is not possible to transfer a clinician from a HPSA score of 18 to 2. The NHSC focuses on placing clinicians in underserved communities in the nation, not by state."

### **New Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Assistance Application**

A new version of the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Multi-Year Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Assistance "Site" Application is now available for use. The application and instructions can be found on the NHSC web site;  
<http://nhsc.bhpr.hrsa.gov/applications/rraa.asp>.

### **Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program (NELRP)**

The NHSC Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program (NELRP) applications are due by March 2<sup>nd</sup> 5pm EST. NELRP is a competitive program that repays 60 percent of the qualifying nursing educational loan balance of Registered Nurses (RNs) selected for funding in exchange for 2 years of service at a critical shortage facility. Participants may be eligible to work a third year and receive an additional 25 percent of the qualifying nursing educational

loan balance. For more information on the NELRP contact the HRSA call center at:

1-800-221-9393 or visit their web site at:  
<http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/nursing/loanreguidance.htm>

### NHSC Sites Information Update

Nationally, as of January 2009 there are 6,914 vacancies posted on the NHSC Job Opportunities List. The vacancies are broken down as follows:

Loan repayors:	4,748
Scholars	1,499
Volunteers:	667

Physicians make up over 3,000 of these vacancies. If you currently work at an approved site and are the responsible party to update your facilities information, then please take this opportunity to review your sites profile /job postings and update them if necessary. <http://nhscjobs.hrsa.gov/>

### Shortage Designations

#### Designations Currently Pending

The following shortage designations are currently being reviewed at the federal level.

**Primary Care:** Judith Basin, Madison, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass

**Dental:** Hill/Blaine LI, Choteau County

#### Current designation analysis:

Recently the Montana Primary Care Office and the Shortage Designation Office worked together to increase the auto HPSA facility scores for Glacier CHC and Marias Healthcare.

For More Information about Shortage Designations please visit the shortage designation website:  
<http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/shortage/>

### Current NHSC Montana Loan Repayers /Scholars

The National Health Service Corp supported 72 providers in Montana in 2008, including:

Primary Care	39
Mental Health	28
Dental	5
Total	72

Twelve of the providers were scholars, and the other sixty were loan repayors. The NHSC program is one of several that contribute to improving access to care in Montana.

### Miscellaneous Happenings

#### PCO Contact Information:

As always, if you need additional information about the NHSC, shortage designations or foreign medical graduates, please don't hesitate to contact me at the address or telephone number listed below:



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